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*Issued by the Alliance for Economic Success as a Service to Benzie County Partners*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**OPTION SECURED TO BUY PLATTE RIVER PROPERTY FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION**

**HOMESTEAD TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN** – The Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy (GTRLC) has secured an option to purchase 52 acres of property in Homestead Township, Benzie County that includes 1,550 feet on the Platte River. The property is located north of the US 31 bridge over the Platte River south of Honor. The goal is to secure grants and donations to enable Homestead Township to own the property and make it a destination for canoers, kayakers, anglers, picnickers and nature lovers. The GTRLC sought the purchase option as part of a partnership agreement involving Homestead Township, the Village of Honor, the Honor Area Restoration Project (HARP), the Benzie Conservation District, the Platte Lake Improvement Association, the GTRLC, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division and the Alliance for Economic Success.

The Partnership Agreement describes roles and responsibilities for grant writing and fund raising to purchase and appropriately develop the property, for management and maintenance of the site and for general project support. The initiative is consistent with the new Benzie County Recreation Plan, the Honor Area Revitalization Strategy and the goals of the MDNR Fisheries Division to increase angler access.

“We are glad to join this robust partnership and provide our expertise and resources for this great community effort,” said Glen Chown, Executive Director of the GTRLC. “This is a wonderful example of what can be done when multiple organizations unify around initiatives such as this which will be transformational for Honor and Homestead Township as well as Benzie County. This is one of those great case studies where protecting and using our great natural resources converges with the need to create economic vitality. Our organization supports community conservation projects where everyone wins.”

“We are once again indebted to the Grand Traverse Regional Conservancy for their leadership and partnership,” said Ingemar Johansson, Chair of the Honor Area Restoration Project, a 501 (C) (3) nonprofit formed to support the revitalization of the greater Honor area. “This has been a dream of many individuals and organizations in Benzie County. We are grateful that Homestead Township is stepping up to be a steward of this remarkable tract of land and river with a host of supporting partners.”

Johansson explained that the Conservancy and Alliance for Economic Success will partner in drafting a Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund grant application for the Township that would provide partial funding to acquire the property. HARP is leading a fund raising effort seeking charitable donations and grants in the amount of \$120,000 needed to match the Trust Fund grant and complete the property purchase. Johansson said the funding campaign began on December 16 and by the end of the day, over \$11,000 had been donated from area individuals and HARP. Those wishing to contribute may make a charitable donation by check by mailing to:

**Honor Area Restoration Project**

ATTN: Platte Property Purchase

PO Box 123

Honor, Michigan 49640

For more information, contact Bruce Wildie at 231-383-4444 or at [bwildie@yahoo.com](mailto:bwildie@yahoo.com)

The firm Spicer Group is developing a site plan with community input to enable access and use of the property. The firm Beckett & Raeder is completing the Township Recreation plan required to apply to the Trust Fund. The site will be part of Benzie County's Explore the Shores program, formed to enable people of all ages, needs and abilities to access and enjoy the County's bounty of water resources.

"This is a tremendous collaborative initiative to create access to a fantastic natural asset, including anglers who enjoy fishing for Brown Trout and Steelhead Trout," said Heather Hettinger, Fisheries Biologist for the Fisheries Division of the MDNR. "There is a lack of access to the Platte River for people to enjoy this iconic fishery. We look forward to partnering with all interests as plans unfold for the property."